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**Business Regulatory, Investment,
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(BRITE)**

BUSINESS REGULATORY, INVESTMENT, AND TRADE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

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ACRONYMS

AEI	Alliance for European Integration
AEO	Authorized Economic Operator
AITA	Association of International Automobile Transporters
AmCham	American Chamber of Commerce
ANSA	National Food Safety Agency
APA	Academy of Public Administration
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
ATIC	Association of Private IT Companies
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BizCLIR	Business Climate, Legal, and Institutional Reform
BIZTAR	Business Regulatory and Tax Administration Reform
BRC	Business Research Company
BRITE	Business Regulatory, Investment, and Trade Environment Program
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CISC	Citizen Information and Service Center
CMR	Convention on Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road
CNAS	National Social Insurance House
CPAS	Social Insurance Personal Number
CRM	Compliance Risk Model
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DG	Director General
EBA	European Business Association
e-Gov	E-Government Center
EIF	Economic Integration Forum
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
FEZ	Free Economic Zone
FSI	FiscServInform
GOM	Government of Moldova
HS	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System
ICP	Inland Customs Point
IDNP	Personal Identification Number

IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPR	Inward Processing Relief
LGSP	USAID Local Government Support Project
MCS	Moldova Customs Service
MOE	Ministry of Economy
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MTSI	Main State Tax Inspectorate
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCFM	National Commission on Financial Markets
NCTS	New Computerized Transit System
OSS	One-stop-shop
PCA	Post Clearance Audit
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
RFP	Request for Proposals
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
SAD	Standard Administrative Document (aka Customs Declaration)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SCP	Simplified Clearance Procedures
SRC	State Registration Chamber
STS	State Tax Service
TAB	Trading Across Borders (World Bank “Doing Business”)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Highlights and Successes

This quarter was marked by more political turbulence and uncertainty but also significant achievements in several project activities. In mid-June the Prime Minister, Chiril Gaburici, resigned after only four months in office, as did the entire cabinet shortly thereafter. The President then appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Natalia Gherman, as the interim prime minister until a new cabinet could be appointed. According to the constitution this could take until mid-September, which would considerably delay a number of BRITE's legislative initiatives. Also in June, elections for local mayoralities and councils were held. The coalition parties won the majority of seats overall, though they lost in several key cities like Balti and Orhei. They have since stated publicly their intention to re-establish a majority coalition that includes the Liberal party, and perhaps the party of former Prime Minister Iurie Leanca. If this could be agreed to soon, it would create a solid pro-Europe coalition in the national parliament and hasten the formation of a new Government.

Despite the political setbacks, the remainder of the quarter was quite productive. For example, the Customs Service agreed to slash the official number of documents required for import and export to three, and the Parliament approved BRITE-drafted amendments to the Joint Stock Company law to strengthen provisions related to conflicts of interest and related party transactions. In addition to the immediate improvement to the business environment, both decisions should lead to significant improvement in Moldova's ranking in the Doing Business survey. The Government also approved the 2015 tax and budget law that included a BRITE-drafted provision to allow for the implementation of the Blue Lane customs channel, which was launched as a pilot in June and will be introduced nationwide August 1. Also, it appears the Ministry of Finance, after years of opposition, may agree to implement deferred payment of trade revenues for low-risk traders. Under Component 3, we launched the new Business Media Program and developed a communications program for the Blue Lane. The following are highlights of the major achievements of the project over the last quarter. These, and other activities, are discussed in greater detail later in the report.

- Four new functionalities for the enhancement of the Taxpayer Current Account were tested and awaiting approval by STS.
- MCS and the Government agree to reduce mandatory customs clearance documents to three.
- Blue Lane customs control channel launched creating opportunities to release more shipments at the border without control.
- Study visit to UNCTAD in Geneva for demonstration of new features of ASYCUDA World EU and their benefits to MCS.
- Parliament approves BRITE-supported amendments to the joint stock company law to strengthen minority shareholder rights.
- Finalized proposed legal amendments to reform trade authorizations and construction permits and their issuance through OSSs.
- Distributed for comment draft legal framework on establishing an OSS for permits issued by ANSA in connection with import-export operations.

- Launched the second stage of the BRITE Business Media Program 2015-2016 with three local media groups – Logos Press, ECONomic Magazin and Mold-Street.
- Roll-out of the media and general communications trainings for MCS staff.
- Developed the MCS AEO logo.
- Supported the first of two CEFTA conferences in 2015 under the chairmanship of Moldova.

SECTION I: PROJECT RESULTS BY COMPONENT

A. Component 1: Tax Administration and Trade Facilitation

A1. Project Intermediate Result 1.1: Improved tax administration reduces the administrative burden of paying taxes while increasing revenue collection

Support the STS to enhance the Taxpayer Online Current Account to the benefit of taxpayers and the STS (1.1.1).

BRITE, together with STS and FSI, worked on analyzing the test results for all four new functionalities to the Current Account according to the list of errors identified during the testing process, and DAAC has made the necessary programming adjustments to eliminate those errors. Afterwards, FSI launched again the procedure of closing the periods and repeated the testing of the new functionalities and all of the analytical and statistical reports, also using the test database.

As was mentioned in the previous report, STS/FSI specialists were required to test the new enhancements on the production platform. However, this action was not carried out because FSI has not made the platform available for testing, despite repeated requests of BRITE, DAAC and STS. FSI submitted an official letter to STS requesting a postponement of this activity to August-September 2015. Taking into consideration that DAAC has performed almost the entire work (except elimination of errors that could appear during the testing process on the production platform) and the delay is caused by the inefficient collaboration between STS and FSI, BRITE discussed with STS the possibility to approve the deliverables and conclude the contract with DAAC. STS seems ready to accept the work completed thus far and agree to have DAAC fix any bugs or errors as part of the one-year maintenance agreement.

Streamline the tax payment system to reduce the number and frequency of individual tax payments, including social payments (1.1.2).

In April, as a follow-up to the Note submitted by the Treasury to the Minister of Finance, a joint meeting was held with the participation of the heads of MoF, Treasury and STS to discuss the single payment proposal. At that time, Minister Arapu did not agree with the idea to implement just one single account for all payments and proposed to create separate accounts for payments to the State Budget, CNAS and CNAM, as well as for the budgets of local administrations (35 accounts). BRITE disagreed with this approach, as it would create more difficulties for taxpayers than exist now. Therefore, discussions continued with MoF and STS experts on a compromise concept convenient for state institutions as well as businesses. The MoF proposed to explore with e-Gov experts the opportunity to utilize the recently created revenue account at the Treasury for payments made by individuals through the MPay mechanism (mobile payments) for the payment of taxes by economic agents. After the consultations with all involved parties, it was agreed (verbally) that this mechanism also could be applied to payments from economic agents through a similar agreement with banks and the Treasury. The e-Gov Center has since prepared a document describing the model for implementing MPay for economic entities and sent it to MoF for a final approval. If approved by MoF, BRITE is prepared to develop the terms of reference

for integration of the payment system with the Current Account System, as well as the resulting IT solution.

Identify and implement other measures to streamline tax administration (1.1.3).

BRITE continued to promote its recommendations for streamlining the process of voluntary liquidation. However, the STS does not consider this a priority at present as it is focused on the legal reforms to restructure the organization.

A2. Project Intermediate Result 1.2: Time and cost of moving goods across borders reduced

A2a. Introduce Refined Compliance Risk Model

Implement Blue Lane according to the work plan approved by the MCS (1.2.1).

As mentioned last quarter, the Government took the extraordinary step of adopting several laws that had yet to be approved by Parliament. One of these was the Tax and Customs Policy law for 2015, which included BRITE-drafted provisions to implement the Blue Lane. The law became effective May 1, 2015. Based on this approval, BRITE and MCS prepared Government regulations that outlined the procedures for implementing Blue Lane, specifically the reverification (desk audit) procedures for customs declarations. These were approved by the Government and became effective June 19, 2015.

BRITE then held a series of meetings with the risk management staff to clarify the new procedures and identify any barriers to implementation. During these meetings, the staff agreed to five risk criteria for the routing of declarations to the Blue Lane (primary criteria). During June, BRITE also finalized an internal procedures manual to guide staff in carrying out Blue Lane reverifications. This became the basis for a training course for desk auditors from all customs houses held over two days in June (see photos below). The Blue Lane was launched on June 24 initially at the Stauceni customs house in Chisinau. It will officially launch nationwide at the beginning of July.

Blue Lane Training Held by Nigel Moore for the MCS Risk Management Team



Assist the MCS to develop its 2015 Strategic Risk Assessment Plan; target a success rate of at least 20 percent by the end of Year 3 (1.2.2).

Work in helping MCS to review and reduce the number of Customs controls at the point of clearance continued throughout the quarter. As part of this activity, BRITE attended and facilitated one of three High-Level Risk Management (HLRMG) meetings held in the period, a management structure that BRITE helped to create. These HLRMG meetings reviewed the efficiency of the MCS risk profiles in use and amended, or deactivated, a number of profiles deemed inefficient.

The policy of focusing on improving the MCS risk profiling methodology is gradually reducing the level of Customs controls at the point of clearance, although there is still some way to go before it can be claimed that the level of Custom control interventions is in-line with international best practice levels. The following table provides a summary of the first 5 months of Customs controls applied at the point of clearance.

Distribution of CDs per lanes during the I quarter of 2015 + April and May						
Red Lane	target	no. of CDs on the red lane	monthly % red lane	discrepancy	cumulative discrepancy	cumulative %
Import – target 20%						
January	2457	2770	22.50%	313	313	22.50%
February	3283	3721	22.70%	438	751	19.80%
March	4051	2970	14.70%	-1081	-330	17.82%
April	3916	2704	13.31%	-1212	-1542	17.75%
Mai	4184	2639	12.61%	-1545	-3087	16.55%
Export - target 8%						
January	654	287	3.50%	-367	-367	3.50%
February	823	361	3.50%	-462	-829	3.51%
March	954	432	3.60%	-522	-1351	3.55%
April	880	244	2.22%	-636	-1987	3.20%
Mai	912	228	2.00%	-684	-2671	2.94%
Yellow Lane	target	no. of CDs on the yellow lane	monthly % yellow lane	discrepancy	cumulative discrepancy	cumulative %
Import – target 25%						
January	3071	4114	33.49%	1043	1043	33.49%
February	4104	5793	35.29%	1689	2732	34.51%
March	5064	7132	35.21%	2068	4800	34.80%
April	4896	6551	33.45%	1655	6455	34.42%
Mai	5230	6106	29.18%	876	7331	33.20%
Red and Yellow Lanes	target	no. of CDs on the red and yellow lanes	monthly % red and yellow lanes	discrepancy	cumulative discrepancy	cumulative %
Import – cumulative target 45%						
January	5528	6884	56.04%	1356	1356	56.04%
February	7388	9514	57.95%	2126	3482	57.13%
March	9115	10102	49.87%	987	4469	54.13%
April	8812	9255	47.26%	443	4912	52.17%
Mai	9415	8745	41.79%	-670	4243	49.75%

It can be seen that the combined level of Customs controls (RED Lane and YELLOW Lane) has declined from the 2014 base line level of over 60% to 49.75%, but more work needs to be done. Upon closer examination of the statistics there is still a high level of YELLOW Lane (documentary) Customs control checks being applied at the point of clearance. However, with the planned introduction of the Blue Lane in the next quarter it is envisaged that this high level of YELLOW Lane checks should be significantly reduced.

Because the majority of risk criteria are related to revenue which is often tied to customs valuation, BRITE has been working with the valuation department to make sure its efforts do not undermine the strategic objectives of the risk management department. The department is planning to introduce a valuation database developed by UNCTAD to set price ranges for selected goods. If not adjusted and applied properly this could significantly raise the number of shipments directed to the Yellow Lane for valuation checks, triggering requests for more information and further delaying clearance.

Recognizing this, Customs made a formal request to BRITE to provide valuation expertise, particularly as applied in the EU. Nigel Moore reviewed this request and agreed to provide the following actions that BRITE could support:

- Assist MCS to finalize a draft Government Decision on Valuation practices based on WTO/EU practices, and, once adopted, provide training to valuation staff, customs brokers and other traders.
- Develop and make publicly available a comprehensive guide on Valuation.
- Review valuation profile criteria, success rates, and propose revised/improved profiles to enhance effectiveness.
- Benchmark valuation approach against the new EC Customs Blueprints when they are officially released and develop an action plan to address any identified needs

To address the first need BRITE recruited a Valuation Expert from Lithuania, Mr. Darius Valunta. Mr. Valunta worked with the valuation staff in MCS for two weeks in May and June to review their valuation practices, introduce EU practices, help draft amendments to valuation legislation, and recommend other best practices. This included presentations and training in EU/Lithuanian approaches to customs valuation control rules of imported goods and risk management and control in customs valuation (see photo). In short, his recommendations and proposed text for the valuation procedures included a shift in valuation control away from clearance to post-audit, closer coordination with the risk management department to clarify risk profiles, and to initiate closer cooperation with business associations and trade groups to agree on valuations of goods imported into Moldova – a standard practice in developed countries where legitimate and regular importers are viewed as partners rather than adversaries of Customs. These reports were provided to USAID separately.



Valuation Expert Darius Valunta Making a Presentation at the MCS Headquarters

Organize a study tour to promote Risk Management best practices (1.2.3).

This was completed in December 2014.

Promote Joint Border Agency profiling (1.2.4).

BRITE has determined that this activity is premature given the lack of preparation among other border agencies, particularly the National Food Safety Agency (ANSA). The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is currently providing support to ANSA in developing risk-based procedures for its interventions. Once this is complete and more operational it will be more feasible to address joint profiling with Customs. This activity will likely be undertaken in Year 4. BRITE requests COR approval to remove this item from the Year 3 work plan.

Develop internal Risk Management Communications Strategy (1.2.5).

Since the adoption of the risk management strategy and the creation of the high-level risk management committee, BRITE has been working with MCS to communicate these changes more widely throughout the organization and encourage more coordination between departments that have information vital for risk management. Admittedly, MCS has been slow to embrace this approach, but we agreed to use the Blue Lane as the first step, since it is important that front line officers and headquarters staff understand this important change in the clearance of shipments. RM and communications staff from MCS together with BRITE developed several approaches to promoting the Blue Lane, including internal and external press releases, brochures, posters and a planned article in the customs service publication “Vama”. These activities are covered in more detail under Component 3 activities.

A2b. Streamline the Import Process

Fully implement Simplified Procedures based on EU norms; targeting 30 percent of all imports using Simplified Procedures by the end of Year 3 (1.3.1).

Despite having the legal procedures in place to implement simplified procedures the customs computer system ASYCUDA must be modified to allow for their full implementation. This is covered in Activity 1.5.3 below.

Based on the findings of an EU-sponsored review of Customs legislation in the areas of simplified procedures and AEOs, BRITE assisted MCS to develop a package of draft amendments to government decisions to eliminate gaps and inconsistencies with EU legislation in these areas (described in last quarter’s report) and others, including customs warehousing, inward processing, customs valuation and electronic import. This package is now under final review in Customs and should be sent to the Government for review and approval in July. As all of these proposals are consistent with EU law and practice we anticipate no strong objections from the Ministry of Finance or others.

Streamline selected customs regimes based on EU norms (1.3.2).

These measures are related to customs warehousing and inward processing and were detailed in last quarter’s report. They are now included in the comprehensive draft legal amendments mentioned above.

Implement Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program (1.3.3).

MCS' AEO program is now operational and consists of approximately 77 authorized companies. In June, MCS announced a pilot mutual recognition program with the EU at the Leuseni BCP that will allow EU AEOs to cross the border into Moldova through a designed fast lane with minimal checks. This will last six months and then be evaluated for expansion. MCS has asked BRITE's support in two areas:

1. Support the monitoring of the AEO pilot with MCS by physically tracking AEO shipments through Leuseni periodically throughout the pilot period and comparing this with MCS data on AEO movements, and also conducting a survey of AEOs on their opinion of the pilot.
2. Recommend and introduce improvements to the AEO pre-audit questionnaire for applicant companies before it becomes mandatory for all new AEOs.

BRITE agreed to consider both and will present proposals in the coming month.

This quarter BRITE also worked with MCS to develop the official AEO logo for Moldova. This is described in more detail under Component 3.

Introduce Electronic Import System; targeting 25 percent of all import declarations to be submitted electronically by the end of Year 3 (1.3.4).

The use of e-Import, despite being available since March 2015, is still not growing significantly and is mostly due to the obstacles identified last quarter, namely:

- Shipments with multiple consignees cannot be accommodated by e-Import declarations.
- The requirement to lodge the SAD at least one hour before the arrival of the truck at the BCP. In the opinion of many, not being able to review the accompanying documents and shipment creates a risk for a non-authentic declaration, which in Moldovan law can result in penalties of 40-100% of the value of the goods. In their view, MCS must address either or both of these aspects to generate more interest in e-Import.
- Any shipment directed to the red lane requires a transit declaration, which cannot be lodged electronically.

MCS has not made this a high priority as yet, but BRITE is encouraging it to address these shortcomings as soon as possible. One suggestion is that MCS make clear through internal order or a public announcement that declarations filed electronically may be self-corrected without penalty. BRITE is working with the control and IT staff at MCS to find solutions to the other problems. This issue was also presented to BRITE's partner media companies as a potential topic for investigation that might raise awareness of the issue and the obstacles to implementation in hopes of spurring action.

Introduce deferred payment of duty and taxes on imports (1.3.5).

Following on discussions and presentations held during the Moldova-Ukraine Trade Facilitation Working Group in Odessa in April (see Other Activities below), BRITE and EUBAM agreed to

collaborate in advocating for deferred payment in Moldova. During the EU-Moldova sub-committee meeting on Customs in May, which included Customs and the Ministry of Finance, EUBAM noted that it was essential that it be implemented in Moldova as part of an AEO and simplified procedures program. Afterwards, BRITE and EUBAM drafted a joint letter to the Ministers of Economy and Finance requesting they implement deferred payment, initially for AEOs, in order to meet their DCFTA obligations. The letter was signed by the head of the EUBAMA mission and Kent Larson, the USAID Country Director (see Annex B).

In June we learned from MCS that the Ministry of Finance had instructed them to develop recommendations for implementing deferred payment in stages, as our letter had recommended. This is good news for BRITE, as it has been advocating for this for years without success. We have since agreed with MCS to revisit our earlier legal drafts on this issue and submit a revised proposal for consideration by the Government. The report we prepared in 2013 and the study we concluded last quarter can also be used as a basis for the RIA and explanatory note.

Reduce the number and streamline the issuance of import permits (1.3.6).

BRITE is pleased to report that as a result of last quarter's assignment of our Lithuanian TARIC expert, Vida Mickiene, MCS proposed and the Prime Minister approved an order to establish an inter-ministerial committee to determine all non-tariff regulations on goods, assign them to the HS classification, and then identify opportunities to streamline them before approving them in the form of the integrated tariff - TARIM. BRITE agreed to support the group and the first meeting took place on May 15. The group continues to meet regularly based on specific permits and areas of regulations like food safety, hazardous goods, licensed activities, etc. the work is progressing slowly but steadily as the participants understand better the purpose of the exercise and assign the proper people to participate. We do anticipate, however, that the work will take longer than expected and the attempts to eliminate and streamline some permits will be strongly opposed by some groups.

Another significant achievement in streamlining the import (and export) process was the decision of MCS in May to slash the number of required documents for clearance. According to the decision, only three documents are required for import or export. These include the invoice, transportation documentation (e.g. the CMR note) and any permits related to the types of goods (e.g. certificate of origin or compliance certificate). Supplementary documents may be requested based on risk selectivity: that is, for the declarations directed to the red and yellow lanes. Until today, according to the World Bank Doing Business, at least 11 types of documents were required for the clearance of goods at import and 9 types at export.

In order to ensure this is effectively implemented and not abused by custom officers, BRITE worked closely with MCS to develop implementing regulations that stipulate clearly the process of when additional documents may be required, in what form and how they will be used. The regulation also limits the types of documents that can be requested. This regulation was finalized with MCS and should be approved by either an internal order or government decision in July. It should be noted that BRITE advocated for conditional release of goods pending presentation of documents, but this was not approved by MCS. BRITE intends to monitor the implementation of this change closely over the coming months.

A2c. Streamline the Export Process

Reduce the number and streamline the issuance of export permits (1.4.1).

The initial inventory of all export permits was completed in Year 2. This will be combined with the import permit database and the TARIM once completed (see 1.3.6).

Introduce self-certified certificates of origin (1.4.2).

As reported last quarter, MCS has requested support from EUBAM for this effort. In fact, a government decision was approved in June to allow for self-certification by authorized exporters.

Promote and expand the use of electronic export; targeting 55 percent of all export declarations by the end of Year 3 (1.4.3).

The use of electronic declarations for export, while significant, has plateaued recently, remaining around 45% of all export declarations. BRITE and MCS finalized and printed a set of e-Export brochures that target all exporters, but particularly smaller companies that may not be aware the service is available through customs brokers. These were to be distributed during regional outreach events planned for this quarter but MCS was unable to organize them as their key staff were unavailable. We hope these will take place in the coming quarter.

A2d. Introduce other Electronic Solutions to Streamline Cross-Border Trade

Develop customized software for electronic approval of phyto-sanitary and veterinary-sanitary certificates on import and export (1.5.1).

This work depends on progress towards streamlining the permit process within ANSA, from a legal standpoint, that is covered in Component 2 (see 2.1.2 below). The initial set of amendments was finalized and distributed to all stakeholders this quarter. While these are being discussed and finalized, BRITE started elaborating the Terms of Reference for the implementation of an electronic information system designed to manage the import/export procedures of agro-goods, starting from issuing the permissive documents and ending with the import/export process itself. According to the concept proposed by BRITE a connection also will be established between the planned ANSA electronic system and MCS's ASYCUDA World, as well as with the systems of other involved public authorities, if appropriate.

Develop electronic data exchange among the MCS, the STS, and the CRIS Register to eliminate some paper transactions and need for visits to public authorities, and to enhance Risk Management capabilities within the MCS and the STS (1.5.2).

This quarter, BRITE, MCS and STS finally agreed upon a set of data to be exchanged among each other in a format that can be accommodated within the ASYCUDA database. This is the challenge since a new database structure will be required in ASYCUDA that matches EU requirements and any data imported must be properly formatted.

BRITE's ASYCUDA World experts Mihai Popazov and David Wright traveled to Moldova in June to determine the technical requirements and begin the work on the web services. This work can now begin for data from the CRIS Register once CRIS is able to ensure it can transfer any

updates to its database on a daily basis to MConnect. BRITE also needs to finalize an agreement with MCS and STS on the data required for the first stage transfer, i.e. the minimum required for reference data and risk management. This should be completed by early July, at which point the technical specifications for this data can be finalized.

Activate additional modules in ASYCUDA to implement EU Simplified Procedures in customs and paperless processing (1.5.3).

BRITE's earlier assessment concluded that the existing version of AW being used by MCS is not fit for purpose and needs to be replaced rather than patched if the MCS have made a business decision that AW will remain their Customs Declaration Processing System going forward. The assessment also highlighted that there was an existing lack of in-depth knowledge among MCS personnel about the full capabilities and functionalities of the AW system and this was presently seen as an inhibiting factor to maximizing the efficiency of various MCS processes, including risk management. With an upgrade of the system and the corresponding support training this knowledge gap could be successfully overcome.

For this reason BRITE organized a study tour of MCS representatives to the UNCTAD ASYCUDA Division in Geneva June 8-10 to demonstrate the capabilities of the latest version of AW 4.2.2 EU, specifically in the areas of EU simplified procedures, risk management, customs controls, and single window. The sessions were detailed and practical and the participants were deeply engaged in the subject matter. In fact, they requested additional time that, unfortunately, could not be provided by UNCTAD or BRITE. MCS are evaluating internally their next steps and will inform BRITE in early July. We suspect they would like to explore some of the features in more detail and better determine what changes they will have to make both to their legislation and their other existing IT systems. A more detailed report of the study visit will be provided to USAID separately.

MCS, BRITE at the UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva



A2e. Other Activities to Improve Communications and Increase Transparency

Support the National Customs Consultative Committee (NCCC) (1.6.1).

The first meeting of the NCCC this year was held on April 7 with the support of BRITE as the Secretariat. The main topics discussed included:

- a) Investigate the possibility for the national producers and exporters of fresh fruits and vegetables to import cardboard boxes under the temporary admission regime. This is necessitated by the fact that cardboard is required by the EU whereas Russia/CIA accepted wooden crates. To stimulate greater exports to the EU and lower costs for exporters they ask MCS to find a solution so they don't incur VAT when importing cardboard boxes. AmCham recommended a temporary storage solution. MCS agreed to find a possible solution.
- b) The streamlining of the procedure of electronic import/export regarding the consolidated cargoes. Local clearance is not possible for multiple consignments in a consolidated shipment. MCS agreed to consider a solution.
- c) Elimination of the practices of the customs inspectors to request customs stamps on transport/commercial documents (stamps from the border) as a condition for the clearance at the inland customs. MCS is opposed to this and will ensure stamps are applied at the border.
- d) Discussion of the latest initiatives of the MCS (territorial reorganization, reorganization of customs broker legislation).
- e) Presentation of EUBAM's new offices and initiatives, e.g. the planned study of procedures at the Giurgiulesti port.

Ensure all MCS Internal Orders conform to Moldovan law (1.6.2).

As reported last quarter, all internal orders identified for cancellation were cancelled by MCS, and they continue to prepare revisions to others that will require Government decisions. MCS has not requested our assistance, but we hope to engage with them in the coming quarter to complete this work.

Develop plain-language guides for economic operators based on reformed customs processes (with Component 3) (1.6.3).

Last quarter, BRITE and MCS completed the first procedure manual for the customs regime of Inward Processing Relief. Based on this, BRITE engaged the same expert to prepare a similar guide for traders. This was completed in May, approved by MCS and posted on the MCS website.

We also completed work on the next customs regime – temporary admission. This internal guide for customs officers was presented to MCS for approval in late June and we expect to start work on the guide for traders in July.

We also started preparing two additional guides this quarter – Advanced Rulings for Classification and Origin. These are two important mechanisms that allow importers and exporters to receive binding decisions of Customs on the classification of their goods and/or their

origin and minimize disputes over these during the clearance process. These should be completed by the end of July.

A2f. Other Activities

Conduct time-release studies at selected border crossing points (BCPs) (1.7.1).

Completed.

1st Moldova-Ukraine Trade Facilitation Working Group

BRITE participated in the first Trade Facilitation Working for Ukraine and Moldova organized by EUBAM in Odessa April 16-18. The purpose of the group is to strengthen relations between the two Customs services and their donors, and to assist them in developing roadmaps for AA/DCFTA implementation and to harmonize their approaches. The main issues presented and discussed were AEO programs, post clearance audit, deferred payment and guarantee systems, and the EU common transit system NCTS, and included presenters from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, and the UK. BRITE's adviser Nigel Moore presented and led the discussion on deferred payment and guarantees. As a result, BRITE agreed with EUBAM to raise the issue jointly with the EU sub-committee and the GoM in Moldova through a joint letter outlining the necessity and the benefits. We also agreed to support a second working group meeting in the fall of 2015 in Moldova.

Customs Terminal Reform

Continuing on the work started with AmCham and their BRITE-funded report on customs terminals, we participated in the MCS/BRITE/EUBAM workshop on customs terminals in May. EUBAM led the discussions with an expert from Slovak Customs. The approach of EUBAM and BRITE is to treat the movement of goods into customs terminals as "temporary storage" under the customs code and to identify those areas where Moldovan practice is not in line with the EU and how best to address these.

The discussions were highly technical and detailed and took place over two full days. In the end, a list of conditions and processes were identified that now have to be transposed into normative acts, including changes to the customs code and other customs regulations. These were started by MCS in June and BRITE will continue the work into July in hopes of presenting a draft to all stakeholders by early August.



MCS, BRITE, EUBAM and AmCham Moldova at the Workshop on Customs Terminals

B. Component 2: High-Impact Regulatory Reforms

B1. Project Intermediate Result 2.1: Regulatory framework improved

Improve Moldova's ranking in the annual World Bank *Doing Business* survey.

Protecting Investors (2.1.1).

In April and May BRITE together with the MoE worked directly with the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance in promoting and explaining draft amendments to the Law on Joint Stock Companies developed by BRITE. The amendments were approved by the Parliament on May 29 and entered into force as of June 19. The amendments significantly streamline the regulatory framework for protecting minority investors. The new provisions eliminate gaps that previously had allowed company managers to avoid restrictions for conflict of interest transactions. The amendments provide a new definition for transactions with related parties and clear criteria for identification of personal interest in a transaction concluded by a company. According to these amendments, the company is required to fully disclose the information about a transaction with a related party before and after concluding such a transaction. Based on this, BRITE adjusted the evaluation questionnaire for the Doing Business Report, and informed the World Bank evaluation team about the recent improvements to the law. BRITE also initiated collaboration with the Supreme Court of Justice in order to develop practical recommendations for courts in implementing the amendments.

Trading Across Borders and Paying Taxes (2.1.2).

BRITE developed and provided to ANSA, the MoE and the Ministry of Agriculture a set of amendments to various food safety laws that dramatically streamline import/export process for agro-food products. The draft amendments essentially reduce the time and costs of import/export operations, eliminate two licenses issued by the Licensing Chamber and 10 permits issued by ANSA, and bring import/export requirements for agro-food products in line with the EU regulations. In May, BRITE initiated consultations with the private sector, ministries and ANSA. Together with AmCham and EBA, BRITE also organized a round table with the companies importing and exporting agro-food products to present and validate the approach and amendments. Also, amendments have been discussed at a common meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and ANSA. As agreed, the Ministry of Agriculture and ANSA will provide their comments and views to the amendments by the end of June, and afterwards amendments will be reviewed by all ministries and agencies of the Government. However, it is expected that the revision process in the Government will take place slowly, due to the recent resignation of the Government and strong opposition to these amendments from within ANSA. In these conditions, BRITE is considering to work directly with the Parliament in finishing and adopting the amendments to food safety laws. In addition, we will likely recommend engaging several EU food safety experts to provide commentary to our amendments and support BRITE and the MoE in discussion with ANSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Parliament. We will also seek the support of the EU, which is planning a new technical assistance project for ANSA.



Dealing with Construction Permits (2.1.3).

This quarter, BRITE held individual meetings with the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, and several construction companies to discuss the draft Government Regulation on establishing the OSS for authorizing construction works proposed by BRITE. Based on these we introduced several adjustments, and also amended the approach so the OSS so that it is part of “e-Local Act” IT system that will include other locally-issued permits, like trade authorizations. In May the draft Regulation passed initial revision by the MoE and has been sent for review by ministries before the final approval in Government. Again, this review will be delayed pending the appointment of a new Government.

B2. Project Intermediate Result 2.2: Administrative burdens and compliance costs for businesses reduced

Reduce the number of permits required for business activity; streamline the issuance of permits (2.2.1).

At the end of 2014 BRITE developed and provided to the MoE a set of amendments aimed to streamline the permitting process and eliminate abusive practices faced by the business community when obtaining permits from public agencies. Generally speaking, these amendments consisted of 2 parts:

- new rules that streamline the permitting process
- proposals to eliminate 27 permits/authorizations and 9 licenses.

MoE, however, is not ready to promote these amendments for various reasons, e.g. it is reluctant to cut licenses issued by its own subsidiary (Licensing Chamber); it understands that all agencies will be against the amendments and, being alone, MoE will not be able to promote the

amendments. For these reasons, MoE will support the first part of our approach – introducing new rules for permits.

At the same time, the World Bank under its competitiveness project is conducting an assessment of the possibility to create a single OSS for all permits, authorizations and licenses etc. Pending the results of this study, MoE is reluctant to address any further permit reform. BRITE has since included the first part of its amendments into the draft prepared for ANSA permits (see above). We will try to address other proposals with the support of the World Bank and IFC.

Streamlining the issuance of internal (retail) trade authorization by local public authorities (2.2.2).

BRITE's concept to reform the issuance of internal trade permits passed the review and revision process in the Government this quarter and was presented by the Government to the World Bank as a qualifying reform initiative under its budget support program. Unfortunately, the MoE also merged this draft with another initiative that sought to regulate certain domestic products and prices that the World Bank rejected as anti-competitive. Furthermore, the World Bank found aspects of BRITE's draft also problematic, specifically the "authorization" power of local authorities. The Bank preferred instead to have businesses notify local authorities rather than seek approval. While we agree with this approach, and even considered it, we argued that this would likely be opposed by LPAs and parliamentarians, and would also require another round of review in the Government, which would delay any reforms for many more months. After numerous discussions with World Bank and IFC experts we arrived at a compromise draft that introduces "notification" but retains the bulk of BRITE's other reforms. To avoid a new round of revisions by the ministries and approval by the Government, BRITE, MoE and the WB have agreed to have this draft initiated by one or more parliamentarians. MoE has already agreed to identify these and have the draft registered as a parliamentary initiative as early as next month.

Streamline the voluntary liquidation of the enterprise (2.2.3).

BRITE will try to promote its draft amendments through the Secretariat of the Prime Minister's office, since MoF has so far refused to accept or promote these without comment.

Consolidate and streamline business reporting requirements (2.2.4).

After a series of public roundtables with private sector and reporting agencies, the Economic Council of the Prime Minister approved a Concept Paper and Action Plan for reforming business reporting. However, neither the Concept nor the Action Plan, in our opinion, contains concrete and well-defined measures that will streamline business reporting. Mostly, the Action Plan requires reporting agencies to assess their requirements and provide proposals on consolidating and simplifying reports that the private sector now submits to them. As a result, BRITE met with the Economic Council and agreed to provide more direct support to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in assessing and consolidating their statistical reports, since they are one of more problematic agencies for businesses. Plus, they are eager to work with BRITE to improve their internal processes and IT systems, since they have multiple databases and outdated systems. BRITE plans to meet representatives of NBS next month to discuss this and establish a common activity plan.

Develop policies and procedures for determining fees for mandatory services (2.2.5).

No work was undertaken this quarter.

B3. Project Intermediate Result 2.3: Good regulatory practice institutionalized through capacity building and improved public-private dialogue (PPD)

Strengthen the regulatory impact assessment process (2.3.1).

BRITE's draft amendments to improve the RIA process are still pending in the MoE. These were also shared with the World Bank in anticipation of a RIA expert visiting Chisinau in May, but this trip has been delayed. No progress at the Government level is expected until a new Government is appointed.

B4. Project Intermediate Result 2.4: Transparency and access of entrepreneurs to business regulation increased

Implement the State Local Act Registry (2.4.1).

Creation of the State Local Act Registry depends on a legal basis that will require local authorities to introduce their decisions in a centralized database. Starting from this premise, BRITE developed and promoted in the Government, together with the State Chancellery, amendments to the Local Authorities Law. The draft amendments passed all revision stages and are prepared to be approved by the Government before the final adoption by the Parliament. However, it is not clear when the Government will be able to approve this package, since the interim Government cannot submit legislative initiatives to Parliament. BRITE is considering working directly with the Parliament in promoting and adopting the draft amendments as a parliamentary initiative.

Build capacity of both private and public sectors to provide information that will facilitate entrepreneurship (2.4.2).

No activities this quarter. This work depends on the approval of BRITE supported reforms discussed above. Plans include practical guidelines explaining to companies how to accomplish a business operation (e.g. obtaining permits for internal trade, construction, etc. Similar work is being done in the trade area for import/export operations and key customs regimes (see Component 1).

C. Component 3: Strategic Communications

C1. Project Intermediate Result 3.1: Increase awareness and understanding of business climate reform, progress achieved to date, and new reform initiatives

Improve GOM counterparts' communications through capacity building and targeted support (3.1.1).

Moldova State Tax Service

a) Facilitating the revision of the STS Brand Book

As mentioned in the past report, STS identified in early 2015 the need for certain revisions to its brand book due to some omissions on the part of the authority, the consulting heraldist, as well as of the design company. Specifically, new heraldic regulations have been implemented since the approval of the brand book in May 2014 necessitating further modifications, which BRITE's designer completed.

The authority and the design company (contracted again by BRITE to revise the brand book) have been working together since mid-April based on the comprehensive list of adjustments provided by STS. The process is in its final stages; it has been taking longer than expected in large part due to STS' unprecedented attention to detail (a positive aspect) and subsequent additions to the original list of requested updates. That is, STS has taken full ownership of the project as compared to the previous years. The authority has a designated team for the project and has independently contracted the consulting heraldist to comprehensively review the brand book on behalf of the STS.



STS Brandbook Cover

At the same time, the STS' head of the communications team departed in early June, which has presented an additional challenge for wrapping up the project in due time. BRITE has been continuously involved in mediating between the STS and the designer and seeks to make sure that the project is finalized (including the formal acceptance of the brand book by STS) by the end of July.

b) Supporting STS and SIDA experts in researching the possibility of developing a new STS website.

The Swedish Tax Agency communication expert and information architect had a weeklong mission at STS in mid-April, with the goal of analyzing the current situation and developing the concept for rebuilding the STS website. BRITE met with STA and STS to discuss the conclusions of the STA mission and provided recommendations for the next steps that STS should undertake based on the developed concept. The reached agreement was for STS to break down the project into mini-projects, with accompanying action plans and capacity assessment. Based on these, STS is to approach BRITE and other international institutions for support for specific mini-projects.

Again, a new STS website is an ambitious project, and continuity needs to be assured; hence, BRITE has stated that the priority is for STS to evaluate their internal capacity and take ownership of the project.

Moldova Customs Service

a) Communications trainings for MCS staff

During the previous quarter, as a result of the positive feedback of the media trainings for STS employees, BRITE contracted communications expert Ludmila Andronic to deliver similar (but customized) trainings for the MCS. The expert has met with a range of Customs employees, as

well as BRITE, for an assessment of the MCS communication needs in order to develop a customized curriculum.

During May-June, general communications trainings were held for the seven regional customs houses, media communication trainings for the upper management (chiefs and subdivision chiefs) and for the communications team, as well as a training-of-trainers session.

General Communications Training: Balti and Briceni Customs Houses



Based on BRITE’s discussions, MCS have been fully satisfied with the trainings, noting that the sessions were customized to the activity and the challenges of the MCS and included practical recommendations and exercises.

Moreover, the trainings for the upper management and subdivision chiefs emphasized the correct way to involve the MCS in-house communication and press officers and included simulations of press declarations and interviews. Specifically, MCS General Director has brought up for discussion the latest communications issue that their team is facing: responding to public news on uncovered contraband cases where MCS representatives are suspected of involvement and/or

corruption. In the end, MCS General Director has expressed his gratitude for the training and for the constructive and useful recommendations for approaching specific difficult cases.

The consultant is to submit the final report and related deliverables in July, along with the detailed feedback obtained from each training group.

BRITE has also provided logistics support for all trainings.

Media Communications Training with MCS Director General Tudor Balitchi, Deputy Director Corneliu Trofaile and Press Relations Head Officer Tatiana Sompol



b) Developing the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) logo

The introduction of an Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program in Moldova is part of the MCS' efforts to implement risk-based controls and facilitate legitimate trade. One feature of these programs worldwide is a unique brand/logo that will distinguish authorized AEOs, and can be used not only by Customs but by the AEOs themselves. MCS requested BRITE's assistance to develop this logo for Moldova. BRITE responded by contracting a qualified Moldovan firm to produce, together with the MCS, several unique logo concepts. MCS selected its preferred logo concept (see below) and a relevant user book has been elaborated. Once approved by Government decision MCS plans to introduce the logo.

Examples of the Placement of the MCS AEO Logo on Various Backgrounds



c) Promoting e-Customs

The e-export infographics available on the MCS website have been modified this quarter based on the adjustments reflected in the e-export flyers produced last quarter. In the coming quarter, the MCS e-customs page customs.gov.md/ecustoms/ would also be updated with relevant information (i.e. infographics) on e-import, as well as on the Blue Lane.

The e-export flyers will be distributed at regional meetings we hope to organize before the end of the summer. These have been placed on hold by MCS so that the events cover a more comprehensive range of topics, e.g. desk audit mechanism/Blue Lane (effective since end of June), reduced number of documents for clearance (awaiting secondary legislation for functioning) and the recognition of the EU AEO (effective July 1), as well as other simplified procedures. MCS also plans to present the new Moldova AEO logo during the events.

MCS e-Export Infographic on the Electronic Declaration (Screenshot)



d) Communications campaign on the Blue Lane and the related desk audit mechanism

MCS has announced the implementation at the end of June of a new control mechanism designed to simplify customs clearance procedures: selected transactions will be directed to the new customs Blue Lane, allowing them to be released into free circulation without customs control, but subject to a subsequent post-clearance desk audit.

In addition to trainings of the customs specialists by Nigel Moore, BRITE has established together with the MCS

communications team and the post-clearance control subdivision the necessary steps for the promotion of the new mechanism and the Blue Lane. In this regard, BRITE assisted MCS with finalizing the content for Blue Lane brochures in three languages and contracted a local company to produce the design of the brochures in line with that of the e-export flyers. These will be distributed through regional events and on the MCS website.



Blue Lane Brochure Cover Preview

e) Improving the e-customs platforms

BRITE offered last quarter to support the MCS' communications team in organizing a focus group of the most active exporters to identify what improvements could be made to the platform.

The initiative has been scheduled tentatively for mid-July and will include back-to-back focus groups for most active users of the e-Export platform, as well as of e-import.

Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Moldova (MOE)

a) CEFTA Conferences in Moldova

Republic of Moldova holds the Chairmanship of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) for 2015. As a result, the Ministry of Economy of Republic of Moldova (MOE) is organizing with BRITE's support a range of CEFTA conferences, the first of which is set to take place on June 29 – July 2 in Chisinau. The conferences will gather officials of the countries that are parties to the agreement and other stakeholders, including the business community, as well as multilateral donors and organizations. The overall scope of the conferences is to foster better implementation of the Agreement and promote the benefits of CEFTA through trade facilitation and investment promotion in the region.

USAID BRITE has contracted the design company "RT Design Studio" S.R.L to develop the promotional materials for the upcoming conferences (i.e. folders, notepads, pens, banners, photo wall etc.), as well as meals and other catering needs.

The CEFTA Conferences would be followed by the ministerial conference in November, also held in Chisinau, as part of CEFTA Week 2015.

CEFTA Meeting of the Member Countries' Deputy Ministers of Economy/Trade



Increase accountability of government by civil society and the media (3.1.2).

a) Launching the Business Media Program of 2015-2016

Last quarter, BRITE developed a much improved concept for the next stage of its business media program that will allow it to work directly with media companies and encourage their interest and involvement in business environment reforms. As before, the focus will be on developing well-reported, researched, objective, and timely media products in order to stimulate progress on reform initiatives, to investigate and track the government's efficiency in delivering on the promised reform agenda and to bring particular policies and issues to the foreground of public attention.

The BRITE team has carefully refined the structure of the program, its deliverables and relevant schedule. In addition, we completed the selection of the local media companies, whose technical approach and capabilities fit the scope and objectives of the program. The selected media companies represent a mix of online and print publications: Mold-Street (online, Romanian), ECONOMIC Magazin (print and online, Romanian) and the longest standing and most reputable business publication in Moldova - Logos Press (print, Russian).

Following the selection, BRITE conducted negotiations with each company with an emphasis towards:

- the final objective of moving reforms via investigative, well-timed and well-reported media products (rather than producing a plethora of superficial articles on these topics);
- the quality of the deliverable and related expectations, and
- the editorial policies of each company.

With regards to the latter, the agreement has remained that BRITE will not direct the content of the articles, but only suggest general topics and provide insight and feedback to the published articles, story ideas or technical approaches, and knowledgeable sources. It is notable that BRITE has managed to convince Logos-Press, which has a particularly strict editorial policy, to take part in the program and produce materials on topics related to BRITE reforms. This is due in part to the efforts of Olesea Galusca, who has returned to BRITE on a part-time basis to serve as coordinator of the media program. Following the final selection of the media companies, Olesea has been involved in the negotiations and the contracting and has been managing the relationship with the media companies and the operation of the program.

At this point, all companies have submitted their inception reports, have been meeting with the BRITE technical experts for insight on their assigned topics and have been working on their first articles. Three articles have been published this quarter: two investigations by Mold-Street and one editorial in Economist. The companies' monthly reports summarized the readership, reactions to their published articles and any feedback for further approaching the topics. Please see [Annex C](#) for more details about the topics to be covered and for a summary of the published materials.

Develop and implement communications strategies for major BRITE-supported reforms (3.1.3).

These activities are covered in detail in the sections above.

Develop “how-to” guides on BRITE-supported reforms for publication relevant website and dissemination to targeted audiences (3.1.4).

The Inward Processing guide developed last quarter by the BRITE-contracted expert Eduard Cunicica has been posted on the Customs web site in the Customs Regimes section.

<http://www.customs.gov.md:888/files/Registre/Registru/ghid%20agent%20economic%20web.pdf>

MCS plans to introduce the guide to customs specialists and businesses during the regional events. In addition, BRITE plans to produce English and Russian versions of the guide. New guides on Temporary Admission and Advanced Rulings are now under development.

Project communications (3.1.5).

Website and Facebook

BRITE’s website is being updated with the latest events and stories; a range of BRITE news is shared by AmCham Moldova and EBA Moldova on their website. The BRITE Facebook page includes the status about the project and our partners’ current issues. The Facebook page has reached over 940 likes.

USAID BRITE Facebook Page: Top Posts by Reach for the Quarter

Overview	Likes	Reach	Visits	Posts	People				
Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement				
06/15/2015 11:58 am	 Pe 8-10 iunie, programul USAID BRITE și United Nations Conference on Trade and Development au			903	159 34				
04/10/2015 11:21 am	 În cadrul celei mai recente ședințe a Consiliului Consultativ pe lângă Serviciul Vamal al Republicii			882	192 21				
06/05/2015 11:32 am	 „Datorită controlului comun, managementul frontierei moldo-române va deveni mai eficient, iar			418	9 10				
06/01/2015 2:37 pm	 Potrivit lui Kelly Seibold, Directorul Programului USAID BRITE, această realizare importantă a			390	13 16				
06/09/2015 4:12 pm	 USAID BRITE is soliciting proposals from eligible Moldovan organizations for the development of a			376	12 4				
05/07/2015 9:42 am	 REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS (RFQ): Developing the Promotional Materials for the CEFTA Conferences in			359	7 3				
06/23/2015 11:03 am	 Programul USAID BRITE a demarat consultările cu mediul de afaceri și autoritățile publice în privința			338	68 8				
05/18/2015 4:43 pm	 USAID Business Regulatory, Investment, and Trade Environment Program shared Serviciul Vamal al			299	28 4				
05/26/2015 1:14 pm	 Întrevederea expertului internațional Darius Valunta cu reprezentanții Serviciul Vamal al Republicii Moldova			275	42 4				
04/15/2015 4:17 pm	 Doing Business 2015: R.Moldova este pe locul 63, o îmbunătățire de 19 locuri comparativ cu 2014...			258	28 9				
05/20/2015 5:12 pm	 Vești bune pentru importatori și exportatori - a fost redus numărul actelor necesare vămii. Doar 3			220	21 3				

SECTION II: OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

No updates this quarter

SECTION III: PREVIEW OF UPCOMING QUARTER

BRITE is planning the following activities/events in the coming quarter, among others:

Component 1: Tax Administration

- Official launch of the new enhancements to the Taxpayer Current Account (TCA)
- Terms of reference developed for integration of Current Account with Treasury.

Component 1: Trade Facilitation

- Launch Blue Lane nationwide
- Start development of data exchange with Customs, STS and CRIS Regstru;
- Finalize decision on the ASYCUDA upgrade with MCS
- Complete preliminary work of the inter-agency committee on non-tariff trade regulations (TARIM Working Group)
- Assess progress on E-Customs and report findings to MCS
- Finalize guides for traders on temporary admission and advanced rulings

Component 2: Other High-Impact Reform Activities

- Collaborate with parliamentarians and relevant parliamentary committees to promote amendments related to 1) internal trade; 2) import/export operations and ANSA permits, and 3) State Local Act Registry;
- Initiate collaboration and work with the Supreme Court of Justice to duly implement provisions related to investor protections;
- Together with the World Bank and IFC organize a round table related to import/export operations and ANSA permits;
- Initiate working on drafting the list of permits that are required for internal trade of goods;

Component 3: Strategic Communications

- Focus groups of most active users of e-customs platforms in order to obtain useful feedback for the improvement of the platforms and the mechanism
- Develop e-import promotional materials, including a component on the Customs website
- Launch Customs regional events on e-Customs and simplified procedures
- Develop success stories and launch initiatives for the personalization of reforms, with a corresponding photo library
- Monitor impact of Business Media Program via our partners at private sector associations.

SECTION IV: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

RFP for private sector survey announced

BRITE this quarter released an RFP for its next survey of 1,000 private companies as part of its ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts, as well as to obtain useful information for future programming for the final year of the project. Of the 1,000 companies, 500 should be engaged in either import or export, including at least 250 that are required to get certificates from ANSA. The other 500 should be nationally representative and include at minimum of 200 non-VAT payers in order to capture smaller firms. We expect to select an implementer and sign a contract in early July and receive preliminary results in time for the work planning session in mid-September.

Progress toward PMEP Targets

At the end of the third quarter of FY2015 (Y3 of BRITE program), all quarterly PMEP indicators were updated, based on the newly available information.

It is too early to capture impact from the new reforms implemented this quarter, e.g. reducing the number of documents for customs clearance and the introduction of the Customs Blue Lane. For the previous reforms, the monetary benefits produced to private and public sectors (Indicators 2 and 3) were estimated using the extrapolation approach, as there is no evidence that the benefits changed compared to those projected earlier. For some reforms it would be difficult to get new data, as it is either time consuming or requires additional research to be made.

We expect to introduce new updates to the PMEP in the final quarter of the year after the fourth private sector survey is completed. The frequency tables are expected to be delivered by the selected company by mid-September, which means that the results will be reflected in the Y3 annual report.

The core part of the impact shown by Indicator 2 (monetary benefits for private sector) results primarily from reforms implemented in Y2. However, we expect to see significant impact from several reforms implemented in Y3 once the data are available, either through surveys or from official data of the Government. Overall, we expect to achieve our target of \$100 million of impact for the private sector by the end of the project, but the benefits to the public sector will be more modest.

During the third quarter, BRITE conducted several trainings for MCS staff in communications, media relations and in EU Valuation practices and the Blue Lane guidelines. Thus, the number of training hours provided during the first three quarters of Y3 is 3857, and the overall value for this indicator since the project launch is 6671 man-hours, which already is more than the life-of-project target of 5536 man-hours.

The proportion of female-participants in the activities organized by BRITE was 47.9% during the first three quarters of Y3, which is above the minimum set target of 45%.

In the third quarter of Y3, three activities involving PPD were organized with BRITE assistance. This brings the total to 5 events in Y3 compared to a target of 15 for the year.

The Moldovan Exports and Trade Diversification Index value continues to drop, tracking the general decline in Moldovan exports. Currently, based on first quarter 2015 data, the value is 2.72, lower than in the previous quarter, as we already expected in our last quarterly report. Moldova is doing poorly on the Export Unit Value Index, which is 80, meaning the value of exported products was about 20% less than the year before. Part of this could be attributed to the depreciation of the Moldovan Lei. Moldova's exports rely heavily now on the European Union, which is a benefit to many exporters, but comes at the expense of the traditional CIS markets. Since BRITE was launched in 2012, the share of Moldovan exports to the EU increased from 42.1% to 66%, while the share of export to CIS countries dropped from 47.1% to 21%.

Since the beginning of Y3, a total of 31 media stories were counted. We do not include stories from official sites and publications of the public institutions and from the media agencies. The annual target is 50, which we should achieve by the end of September.

ANNEX A: PROGRESS TOWARD THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Nr.	Indicator	Unit	Results				Targets		
			FY 2013	FY 2014	FY2015 Q1-Q3	Life of project	FY 2015	FY 2016	Life of project
BRITE Program Objective: Identify and Implement Business Environment Reforms Through Increased Public Private Dialogue and Improved Institutional Capacity									
1	Percent improvement in raw values of the indicators underlying BRITE-related areas of the World Bank Doing Business rankings	%	4.4	13.5	0	18.5	4	3.7	20
2	Monetized benefit of BRITE-sponsored reforms to the private sector	ml. USD	4.65	48.48	23.89	77.02	35	42.15	100
3	Monetized benefit of BRITE-sponsored reforms to the public sector	ml. USD	0.84	3.60	1.96	6.40	46	50.31	100
4	Number of activities and initiatives, supported by BRITE, and involving the participation of businesses in PPD	area	12	19	5	36	15	15	55
5	Percent of private sector representatives that consider having benefited from reforms implemented with BRITE assistance	%	47.4	62.5	0	62.5	60	70	70
6	Number of regulations and administrative procedures eliminated, streamlined or simplified with BRITE support	#	12	13	2	27	16	16	55
7	Person hours of training provided by USG	#	1,538	1,276	3,857	5704	1000	700	5536
8	Proportion of female participants in BRITE-assisted activities, initiatives and events	%	55.8	48.8	47.9	53	45	45	45
Component 1 – Taxes and Trade									
IR 1.1 – Improved tax administration reduces the administrative burden of paying taxes while increasing revenue collection									
9	Number of hours required to pay taxes each year	#	181	185		185	176	165	165
10	Number of tax payments businesses must pay each year	#	31	21		21	20	10	10
11	Private Sector perception index score for paying taxes	1 (very difficult) - 5 (very easy)	3.97	3.79	3.73	3.73	4.2	4.3	4.3
12a	Time to export	Days	32	23		23	20	18	18
12b	Time to import	Days	35	27		27	24	20	20
13a	Number of documents required to export goods across borders	#	7	9		9	6	5	5
13b	Number of documents required to import goods across borders	#	8	11		11	6	5	5
14	Moldovan Exports and Trade diversification index	1 (very low) - 5 (very high level)	3.07	3.02	2.72	2.72	3.25	3.4	3.4
Component 2 – Other High Impact Reforms									
IR 2.3. Institutionalize good regulatory practice through capacity building and improved public-private dialogue (PPD).									
15	Percent of RIAs approved by the National Working Group from the first reading	%	22	29		29	40	50	50
Component 3 – Strategic Communications									
IR 3.1. Increased awareness and understanding of business climate reform, progress achieved to date, and new reform initiatives.									
16	Percent of private sector representatives that are aware about the reforms implemented with BRITE assistance	%	0.4	11.1	9.2	9.2	25	40	40
17	Number of articles in print media, as well as TV and radio segments, devoted to the specific reforms and project initiatives to improve the business enabling environment	#	31	83	31	145	50	52	200
18	Percent of private sector representatives that respond positively regarding the speed and transparency in the activity of public institutions receiving BRITE assistance.	%	30.2	53.3	50.2	50.2	50	60	60

ANNEX B: JOINT EUBAM-USAID LETTER ON DEFERRED PAYMENT



EUROPEAN UNION BORDER ASSISTANCE MISSION
TO MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE (EUBAM)



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BMMO/TFS/VP

22 May 2015

Stéphane Christophe Bridé
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Moldova

Anatol Arapu
Minister of Finance of the Republic of Moldova

Tudor Balitchi
Director General Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova

Both EUBAM and USAID would like to commend the Government of Moldova on its commitment to facilitating trade as part of its overall economic development program, and its adherence to the trade facilitation standards and tools required by the EU-Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and other international trade agreements.

This commitment is evident in recent changes to primary legislation to introduce key trade facilitation measures, such as simplified customs procedures and an Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program. These measures, however, cannot be fully exploited as trade facilitation tools because Moldova continues to require the full payment of import duties and taxes prior to the release of goods. In fact, this requirement is acting as a barrier to economic operators fully realizing the benefits of these trade facilitation measures.

A legal review undertaken by the EU Delegation customs experts in January 2015 highlighted this fact. Specifically, the EU experts noted that Moldovan legislation does not provide for guarantees of customs debts for users of simplified procedures, a key feature of EU customs legislation, as well as a requirement of the recent World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement and the World Customs Organization (WCO) Revised Kyoto Convention.

As guarantees are already allowed by law, and are being used to secure customs debts for several other customs procedures, we would recommend that this be extended to the customs procedure "Import", including customs simplified procedures. Adopting the general EU and

For questions to EUBAM please contact
Vladimir Pisar
Trade Facilitation specialist
Vladimir.pisar@eubam.org

For questions to USAID please contact
Kelly Seibold
USAID/BRITE Chief of Party
kseibold@brite.md

international practice of shifting the due date for duties and taxes at least 10 days with a guarantee would allow the Moldova Customs Service (MDCS) to release goods into free circulation upon submission of a customs declaration by the economic operator or their agent with certainty that all financial obligations would be duly paid. Payment of any debts and other customs controls then would take place at specified times after the actual entry of goods.

Recognizing the importance of trade revenues to the Moldova State Budget this could be introduced in stages. However, we strongly recommend that legal postponement of payment secured by guarantees (or similar forms of surety) be extended, at a minimum, to existing AEOs and approved users of simplified procedures, as these are already recognized by MDCS as low-risk traders, with the vision of extending this to all importers in the future.

Both EUBAM and USAID, as major technical assistance providers to the MDCS and the trade community, stand ready to assist the Government of Moldova to implement this critical trade facilitation mechanism. Not only will this bring Moldova into compliance with the EU and international customs norms it will help speed the clearance of goods, reduce trade costs, improve the competitiveness of Moldovan goods, and make the country more attractive to foreign and domestic investment. International experience shows that adopting such a procedure poses limited risk to trade revenues and in fact usually results in higher revenues due to increased levels of trade.

Respectfully,

Francesco Bastagli
Head of EUBAM

Kent Larson
Country Director
USAID Moldova

ANNEX C: BUSINESS MEDIA PROGRAM SUMMARY MAY-JUNE 2015

The three media companies Mold-Street (online, Romanian), ECONomist (print and online, Romanian) and Logos Press (print, Russian) contracted for the BRITE Business Media Program have been delegated reform topics drawn from the USAID BRITE activity. For each assigned topic, each company has developed an inception plan with reference to publishing a diversity of well-timed materials – editorials, investigations, interviews and infographics – throughout the duration of the contract.

That is, BRITE has delegated the following nine reform topics at this stage (illustrated in the below table), with the possibility of adding additional topics depending on the progress of the existing ones or on ad-hoc needs of covering a specific reform. The media companies are encouraged to come with topic proposals, as well as any related initiatives for promoting business environment reforms.

BRITE Business Media Program Topic Assignment

Media Company	Main Topic	Complementary Topic
Mold-Street	Streamlining the Construction Permitting Process	Reform of the Permissive Acts for Trade Inventory
ECONomist	Reform of the Internal Trade Permitting Process	Implementing the Single Account
Logos Press	Streamlining the ANSA Permitting Process	Voluntary Liquidation Reform

Mold-Street has started off investigating the construction permitting process and has published two investigative materials. The first piece, published on June 22, analyzed the steps that an entrepreneur needs to undertake in order to receive a construction permit. As indicated by the suggestive headline *The Requirement of Registering the Construction Authorization Has Been Excluded – A Positive but Insufficient Measure*, the author highlights how a legal amendment, adopted in June 2015, eliminates the requirement for a local authority to register a construction authorization with the State Inspection in Construction, while another law maintains this condition in place.

That is, the author explains the merits of the amendment and how a seemingly good initiative fails to streamline the entire process. In the author’s own words presented in the monthly report: “based on the opinions of the authors of the amendments, of representatives of the construction sectors and of the lawyers in the field, the journalistic material presents the realities faced by those in the construction field on a daily basis and the actual effectiveness of the amendment in question. The conclusions of the investigation, based indirectly on the opinions of those quoted in the article, reflect the need for extensive legislative reform in this area with the goal of eliminating corruption.”

The investigation is available at the following [link](#).

Mold-Street’s second investigative article, published on June 26, describes the situation with the urban plans in Moldovan localities. According to the author, only 1% of the rural localities and 33% of cities have urban plans. The authorities blame the deficiency of urban plans on a lack of resources. The articles includes also case studies (i.e. the situation in the city of Ungheni) and examples of best practices, as well as elaborates on how the capital of Chisinau has an urban plan, which is yet to undergo the necessary examinations at a regulatory level.

The original material can be found on the [Mold-Street website](#) and republished by ECONomist on its website [eco.md](#).

Mold-Street Investigation “The Requirement of Registering the Construction Authorization Has Been Excluded – A Positive but Insufficient Measure”

MOLD street

[DESPRE](#)
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AGENDA

ARTICOLE

FOTO

NEWSLETTER

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Excluderea înregistrării autorizației de construcție - un pas pozitiv, dar insuficient

Teme: [Legislația și reelementările Construcții și Imobiliare](#)

O inițiativă legislativă promovată de deputații liberali prevede eliminarea înregistrării autorizației de construcție la Inspecția de Stat în Construcții (ISC) înainte de începerea executării lucrărilor. Efectele acestei anulări vor fi însă minore

Luni, 22.06.2015 04:17 Articol complet



Această construcție se ridică pe locul alteia, care a fost desființată

Foto: mold-street.com

Procedura privind obținerea autorizării executării construcțiilor se găsește reglementată în **Legea privind autorizarea executării lucrărilor în construcție din 9 iulie 2010**.

Potrivit documentului, executarea lucrărilor de construcții este permisă numai în baza unei autorizații de construire, emisă în condițiile legii, la solicitarea titularului unui drept real asupra unui imobil – teren și/sau construcții – identificat prin număr cadastral, în cazul în care legea nu dispune altfel.

Au scos prevederea dintr-o lege, dar au uitat de alta

Art.12 alin.10 din varianta originală a Legii conținea și o prevedere potrivit căreia, autoritatea locală, în calitate de emiten al autorizației de construcție, este obligată „să transmită pentru înregistrare autorizația de construire la Inspecția de Stat în Construcții, care va efectua, în cel mult 3 zile lucrătoare, înregistrarea prin aplicarea semnăturii și ștampilei”.

nevoie să te duci și la Inspecția pentru a o înregistra. Dar Inspecția și așa poate verifica în orice moment cum se efectuează lucrările. Era o procedură inutilă și pe alocuri parcă de intimidare a celor ce construiesc, respectiv, este foarte bine că va fi eliminată”, a precizat Pavel Caba.

De altfel, prevederea din Legea privind calitatea în construcții creează interpretări, or nu este clar ce presupune înregistrarea la ISC. Este oare înregistrarea la ISC o simplă procedură de luare la evidență a autorizației emise de autoritatea locală?

În acest caz, ISC poate efectua înregistrarea recepționarea copiei de la AFL, fără a cere ca anume titularul autorizației s-o prezinte. Sau înregistrarea trebuie să implice o inspecție a autorizației? Chiar și în acest caz, suntem în fața unor întrebări.

Înregistrarea autorizației la ISC duce la extinderea corupției

Mold-Street Investigation “Why Only 1% of Moldovan Localities Have Urban Plans”

MOLD street

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AGENDA

ARTICOLE

FOTO

NEWSLETTER

VIDEO

De ce doar un procent din localitățile Moldovei au planuri urbanistice

Teme: [Legislația și reelementările Construcții și Imobiliare](#)

În prezent în Republica Moldova doar câteva zeci de localități au planuri urbanistice actualizate, iar un număr nedeterminat intenționează să elaboreze aceste documente. De vină este lipsa banilor, susțin autoritățile

Vineri, 26.06.2015 06:47 Articol complet

Asigurarea orașelor cu planuri urbanistice

Nr. ord.	Oraș	Anul elaborării/actualizării PUG-ului					Notă
		2005	2007-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015	
1	Areni Noi	1972	3,3	0	3,7		
2	Bacardheasca	1977					
3	Bălți			2006			
4	Bucure	1974					
5	Cahul	1967		2013		În proces de actualizare	
6	Cartești	1968					
7	Călimășeni			2005			
8	Clujeni	1986					
9	Comănești			2010			
10	Chiribuc	2007					
11	Comrat			2013		În elaborare, PUG	
12	Crușeni			2005			
13	Dondoveni	1964					
14	Orșchia			2004			
15	Dubăsari	1975					
16	Edineț	1981					
17	Fălești			2009			
18	Florești			2006			
19	Ștefănești			2004			
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Foto: slideshare.net

Doi ani în urmă Guvernul adopta Programul pe termen mediu de elaborare a planurilor urbanistice la nivel de localități pe anii 2013-2016, elaborat de Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Construcțiilor (MDRC).

Un procent din sate au planuri urbanistice

Necesitatea acestui program era argumentată prin faptul că doar 19 din cele 57 orașe, precum și 17 din 1.614 localități rurale, adică un procent din localitățile rurale și 33% din cele urbane, dispuneau de documentație de urbanism sau erau în curs de elaborare. Scopul anunțat al Programului este de a stimula dezvoltarea durabilă a satelor și orașelor țării prin asigurarea localităților cu documentație de urbanism și edificarea construcțiilor în baza unui plan și a unei strategii.

Au trecut deja doi ani și a mai rămas un an pentru realizarea Programului dar puțin ce s-a schimbat. Doar aproape 30 de localități au elaborat sau au inițiat elaborarea sau actualizarea Planurilor Urbanistice Generale (PIUG). O informație exactă însă lipsește

În parteneriat cu Asociația Zonelor Metropolitane Iași (Romania), Consiliul raional Novoselytsya (Ucraina) și Institutul de Dezvoltare Urbană (Republica Moldova).

Proiectul a avut o valoare de 166.000 de Euro (circa trei milioane de lei), dintre care contribuția Uniunii Europene a fost de 149.410 de euro, iar restul a autorităților locale.

“Este o lucrare de pionierat în Republica Moldova. La elaborarea planului urbanistic s-a lucrat după cele mai bune practici europene. Astfel au fost organizate dezbateri publice cu participarea autorităților locale, reprezentanților Institutului de Dezvoltare Urbană și locuitorii din toate sectoarele orașului. În consecință planul final conține și opinia cetățenilor”, susține Svetlana Ciobanu, președintele Centriului Regional de Dezvoltare Durabilă din Ungheni.

Potrivit Svetlanei Ciobanu de experiența acumulată la Ungheni se arată interesate și alte autorități. “Primăria orașului Orhei vrea să folosească experiența noastră pentru a elabora un plan urbanistic actualizat” a adăugat șefa Centriului Regional de

ECONomist's first article is an editorial introducing the Single Account topic. The editorial describes the steps a company takes in order to pay taxes, emphasizing the burden of transferring taxes to several bank accounts provided the numerous budgetary classifications. As pointed by the author, the taxpayers currently issue separate payment orders for each tax, fee, or fine to be paid to the state budget, local budget, to the social security or medical insurance sectors. The issue is amplified for large economic operators. Specifically, a company with multiple subdivisions in different localities often needs to make multiple payments in relation to a single tax report, so that the payments are distributed to the various treasury accounts of the administrative-territorial divisions relevant to the company. The author goes on to introduce the necessity of a single account at the State Treasury for the payment of all fees and taxes - the solution for eliminating this burden to the paying of taxes by businesses. The author describes the benefits of the Single Account concept for the authorities and for the economic operators – for the latter, the benefits being reduced time, costs (i.e. one instead of an average of 35 bank commissions paid) and risks of being penalized for errors when calculating each payment for transfer, among others.

The article was included in the publication's June 24th newspaper (print) that had a circulation of 2000 units. The online version is available at the following [link](#).

ECONomist Editorial "Reducing the Fiscal Burden without Affecting the State Budget"

4 | 24 Iunie 2015

reforme

€C MAGAZIN ECONOMIC
NOMIST

Cum reducem povara fiscală fără a prejudicia veniturile la buget

De regulă, când agenții economici pun problema presului fiscal, autoritățile au un argument greu de combătut contra acestei doleanțe. Dacă reducem impozitele, de unde vom lua bani pentru pensii, salarii, învățământ, asistență socială? Un prim răspuns, la care s-ar gândi în primul rând un contribuabil onest sufocat de taxe și impozite ar fi: din reducerea enormei evaziuni fiscale, evaluate de către unii experți chiar la 2/3 din buget. Este aceasta atât de mare sau nu rămâne să stabilească Fiscul, când va ajunge să deconspire măcar o jumătate din aceste evaziuni. Însă, la criza în care se află la moment sistemul central de stat, inclusiv cel de administrare fiscală, care așa și nu reușesc să schimbe vizibil mentalitatea angajaților, este evident că din această direcție în viitorul apropiat nu putem să ne așteptăm la prea mari progrese.



deseori trebuie să efectueze plăți multiple pentru o singură dare de seamă fiscală, deoarece încasări- Odată cu implementarea conceptului contribuabilul va întocmi factura de plată pentru în loc de 35 în medie în prezent, dar și timpul pentru completarea acestor conturi de plată.